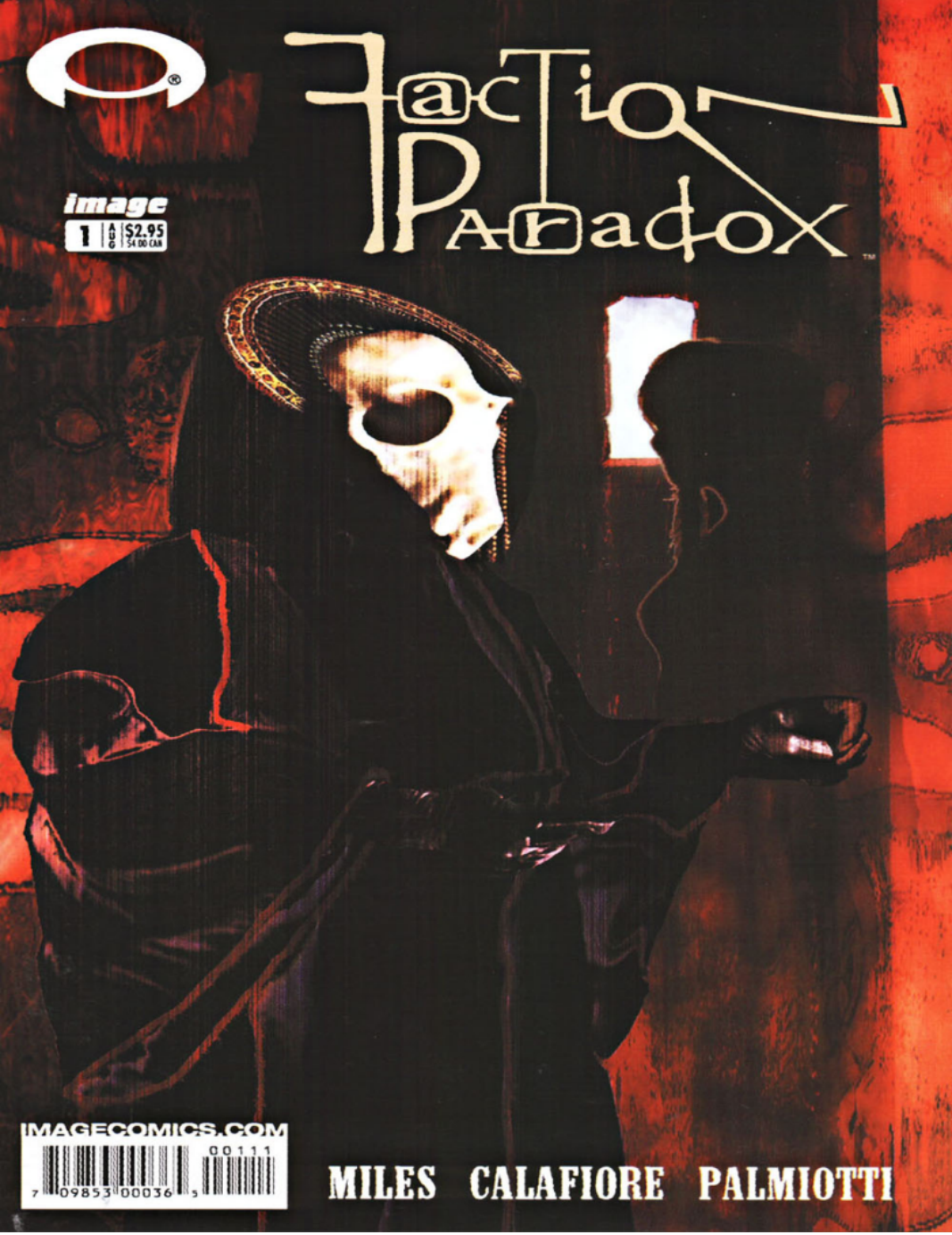
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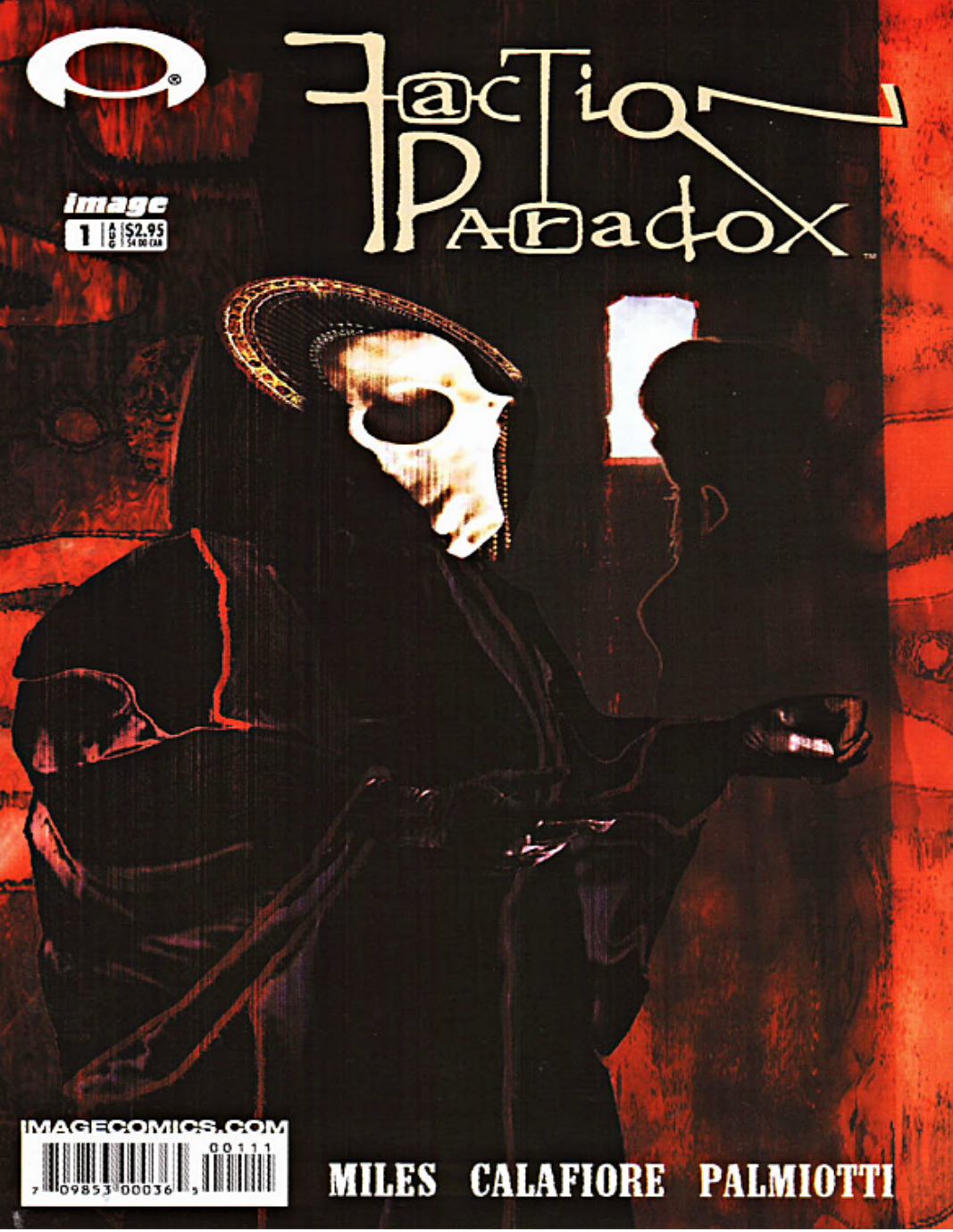
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Faction Paradox

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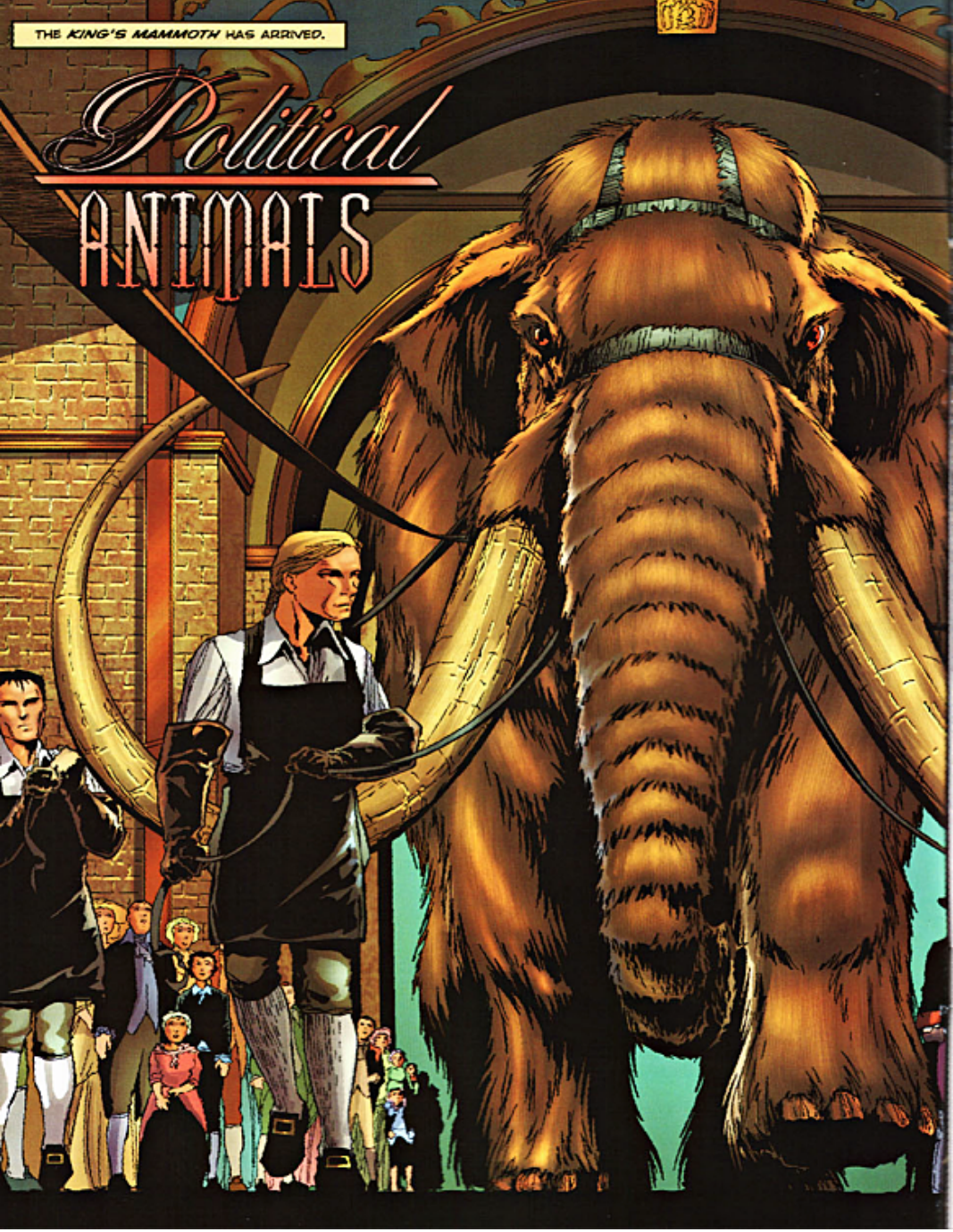
1774.
THE HEART OF CIVILISATION.
...AND DID YOU SEE? I COULDN'T SEE PAST ALL THE PEOPLE, BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN TWENTY FEET TALL.
THEY SAY THE SHIP THAT BROUGHT IT HERE WAS THE SIZE OF A PALACE. AND ITS COAT... IT MUST SMELL SO OLD.
I'VE NEVER SEEN EVERYONE SO EXCITED. HALF OF LONDON MUST BE OUT AT THE GATES.
I SHOULD THINK SO. HIS MAJESTY WANTS EVERYONE TO KNOW HOW BIG HIS BEAST IS.
HE LIKES TO MAKE A POINT, OUR GEORGE.
"WHAT DO WE FEED IT, THOUGH? DO WE HAVE TO GROOM IT?"
I DOUBT IT'LL LIVE THAT LONG.
IT'S ONLY HERE AS A GESTURE, ISOBEL. THE EMPRESS WANTS HIS MAJESTY TO KNOW SHE'S READY TO SHARE HER SECRETS WITH HIM.
SHE'S A CLEVER WITCH, THAT ONE.
OH! I'D LOVE TO HAVE SECRETS.
DID YOU SEE THE AMBASSADORS? THE LADY IN THE ROBES. AND THE AMERICANS. THEY LOOKED SO IMPORTANT...
"WELL NOW. IMPORTANT OR NOT, THEY DO SEEM TO HAVE LEFT US WITH ANOTHER CHARGE, DON'T THEY?"
AND MAKE SURE YOU TAKE ALL THE BONE OUT OF THAT CHICKEN, ISOBEL. WE DON'T WANT THE AMERICANS' ANIMAL HAVING ANYTHING BONE.
ONCE YOU'RE FINISHED, YOU CAN GO OUT AND WATCH THE PROCESSION.
OH... MR. SNADDON, LOOK!
IT'S COMING.
CALL OUT THE SERVANTS.
BANG THE DRUMS.


THE KING'S MAMMOTH HAS ARRIVED.
Political
ANIMALS

"YOUR MAJESTY? THE DIGNITARIES ARE ALL HERE, INCLUDING THE, AHH, MORE FOREIGN ONES.
"YOUR MAJESTY...?"
QUITE A BEAST, MMM? EMPRESS CATHERINE TELLS ME IT'S THE ONLY ONE ALIVE IN EUROPE.
HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING THIS BIG IN YEARS. THE COURT IN NAPLES HAS GOT A RHINOCEROS, AND THEY THINK THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.
THE DIGNITARIES, YOUR MAJESTY...?
MM? OH, YES. MAKE SURE THEY ALL GET A GOOD LOOK BEFORE THEY COME INSIDE THE PALACE.
JUST THINK. THE WORLD MUST HAVE BEEN FULL OF THESE CREATURES, BEFORE THE FLOOD. NOAH MUST HAVE MISSED A FEW, EH?
NOT EVEN AS LONG AGO AS THAT, YOUR MAJESTY. AHH...
...I BELIEVE THE AMERICANS HAVE BROUGHT A GIFT OF THEIR OWN. MR. SHADDON'S ATTENDING TO IT.
HMM. YOU'RE SURE YOUR MEN ARE READY FOR THIS RECEPTION, WILMING? WE DON'T WANT ANY AWKWARDNESS.
I ASSURE YOU, YOUR MAJESTY, THE RECEPTION'S QUITE NECESSARY. WHAT WITH RECENT, AH, EVENTS...
YES, YES, I'M SURE. BUT LET'S GET IT DONE WITH, SHALL WE?
THEN WE CAN START THE HUNT.

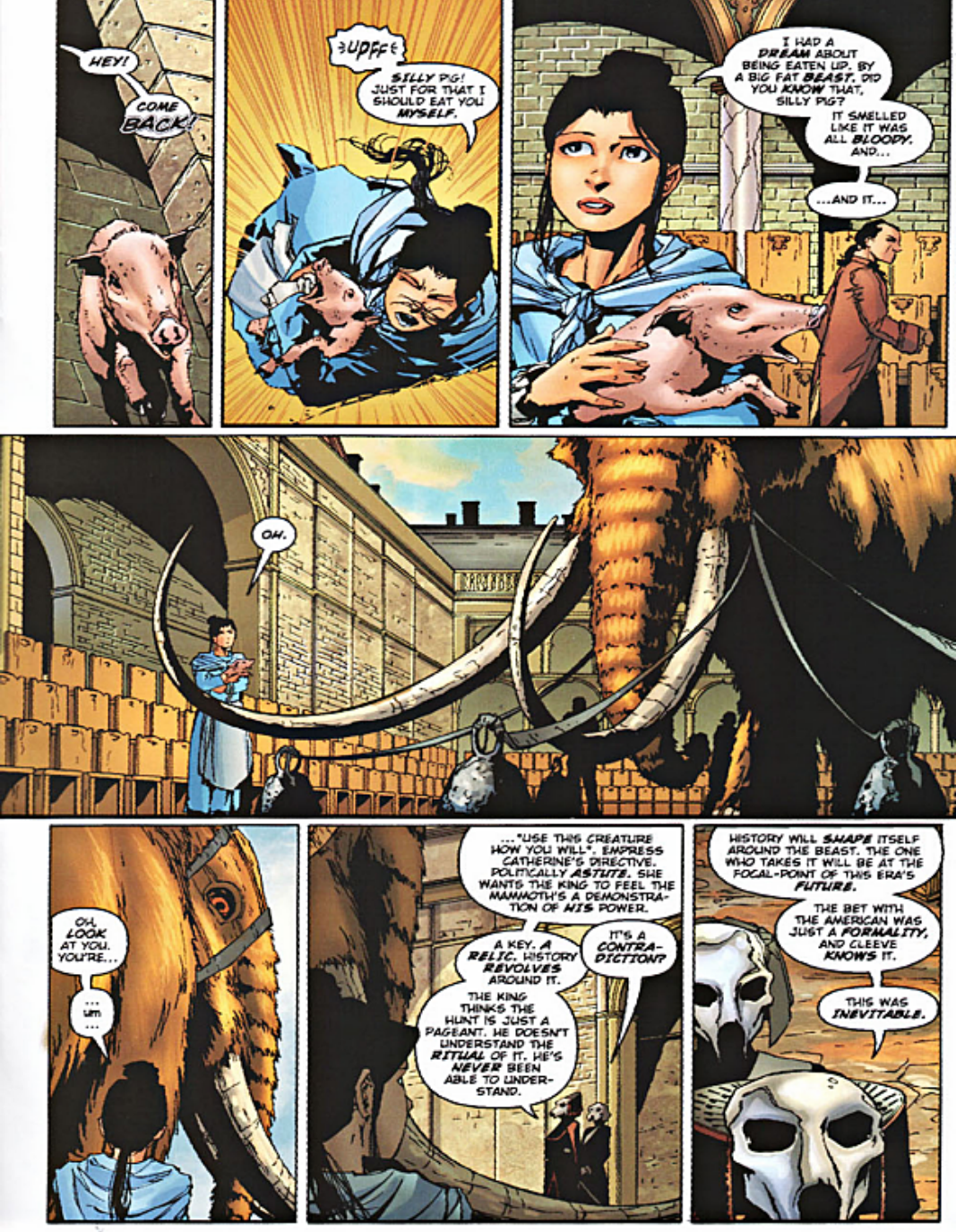
"PLEASE, MY LADY. IF YOU CAN JUST WAIT..."
"NO. WE INSIST ON INSPECTING THE ANIMAL IMMEDIATELY."
BUT I ASSURE YOU... ONCE HIS MAJESTY'S HERE...
HIS MAJESTY IS UNAWARE OF THE CREATURE'S IMPORTANCE. HE MAY NOT APPRECIATE HOW... UNPREDICTABLE ITS SITUATION IS.
YOU KNOW WHAT THE ANIMAL IS? WHAT IT REPRESENTS?
ERR... WELL, IT'S A SORT OF ELEPHANT. FROM RUSSIA...
IT'S A RELIC. A THING OF HISTORY.
INFORM HIS MAJESTY THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FACTION PARADOX REQUEST A PRIVATE VIEWING BEFORE THE HUNT. WE FEEL IT'S OUR RIGHT.
YOU CAN ASSURE HIM WE'RE ONLY CONSIDERING THE FUTURE.
WELL, I CAN SEE WHY YOU'D BE SO INTERESTED IN THE ANIMAL, MA'AM. YOU'VE GOT SO MUCH IN COMMON.
YOU KNOW, THEY SAY THE MAMMOTH'S SUPPOSED TO BE EXTINCT.
DOESN'T BELONG HERE, YOU COULD SAY.
MISTER CLEEVE. THE COLONIAL.
PLEASE, DON'T TRY TO INVOLVE YOURSELF IN OUR AFFAIRS. THIS IS A MATTER OF HISTORY, AND YOUR PEOPLE ARE HARDLY EQUIPPED FOR THAT.
NOW, THAT'S AS MAY BE. BUT IT STRIKES ME THAT WHOEVER WINS THIS HUNT IS LIKELY TO HAVE THE KING'S EAR, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
IT'S THE WAY THESE ENGLISH LIKE TO PROVE THEMSELVES.
DON'T BE FATUOUS.

WITH RESPECT, MR. CLEEVE, THE COURT'S HARDLY LIKELY TO FAVOUR YOUR KIND. NOT NOW, NOT EVER.
SHOULD I REMIND YOU OF BOSTON...?
NOT AT ALL, MOTHER FRANCESCA. HAND ON MY HEART, YOU COULD EVEN SAY WE'RE PROUD OF IT.
AH... MISTER CLEEVE? PERHAPS IT DOESN'T BECOME US TO ARGUE WITH THE AMBASSADRESS. NOT HERE.
AS I UNDERSTAND IT, MOTHER, YOU REPRESENT ONE OF THE ISLAND COLONIES...?
OH, I THINK SHE COMES FROM A LOT FARTHER AWAY THAN THAT.
SEE NOW, IF SHE'S SO INTERESTED IN HISTORY, THEN I SUGGEST A LITTLE WAGER. JUST A TOKEN, YOU UNDERSTAND.
THE HUNT. WHOEVER WINS IT, WE'LL SAY THEY GET THE SOLE RIGHTS TO THIS FUTURE OF YOURS, MOTHER.
HOW DOES THAT SOUND?
A RITUAL CHALLENGE?
RITUAL'S OUR BUSINESS, CLEEVE. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO.
I ACCEPT, OF COURSE.
WELL, I LIKE A WAGER, KIND OF GENTLEMANLY.
NO OFFENCE INTENDED.
YOU MUST KNOW HOW CRITICAL THIS PERIOD IS. ARE YOU HERE TO PLEAD WITH THE COURT? BEFORE IT PUTS YOUR ENTIRE COUNTRY UNDER MARTIAL LAW?
OH, WE'RE IN HISTORY'S CRUCIBLE ALL RIGHT, MA'AM. BUT MYSELF, I'M JUST HERE BECAUSE HIS MAJESTY WAS GRACIOUS ENOUGH TO INVITE ME.
THEY WON'T LISTEN. SURELY YOU REALISE THAT.
WE KNOW THIS COURT. WE HAVE WAYS OF INFLUENCING THE KING...
SO HAVE WE, MA'AM. YOU THINK THE MAMMOTH'S SOMETHING, JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT WE'VE BROUGHT.
WE'VE GOT OUR OWN SPECIAL KIND OF HUNTING-DOG.

"...AND THEN THEY MADE A BET, AND THE AMERICAN SAID HE HAD A DOG. BUT I'VE SEEN THE ANIMAL THEY BROUGHT, AND IT'S NOT A...
"...WELL, ANYWAY. YOU SHOULD SEE THE LADY. I THINK HER MASK'S MADE OF BONE."
"HUHH. SHE'S FOREIGN."
THEY SAID SHE'S FROM FACTION PARADOX. MAYBE THAT MEANS SHE'S FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD.
MR. HOBGATT... THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT A HUNT. ARE ANY OF THE ANIMALS GOING TO BE SLAUGHTERED...?
NOT MY BUSINESS.
SEE THAT? ONE OF THE MONKEYS DIED LAST NIGHT. YOU CLEAN THIS LEG OFF, YOU CAN MAKE A GOOD HILT OUT OF IT.
UM. IT'S JUST... THE RUSSIAN ANIMAL. NOBODY'S TOLD ME WHAT TO FEED IT YET...
GIVE IT WINE. YOU ALWAYS GIVE THE BIG ONES WINE.
BIG ONES DIE EARLY. WINE STOPS THE BUGGERS WHINING SO MUCH.
HOBGATT.
UH. SIR.
HIS MAJESTY WANTS THE ANIMALS IN PLACE BY DUSK. I TRUST YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LOSE ANY MORE LIVESTOCK.
THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME OF US, HOBGATT.
SIR. YES, SIR.
WE NEED A SHOW OF STRENGTH. WE DON'T WANT TO GIVE THE PRESS ANY MORE EXCUSES TO SET THE HOUNDS ON US.
AND WE DON'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE IDIOTS IN FRONT OF OUR VISITORS, DO WE?

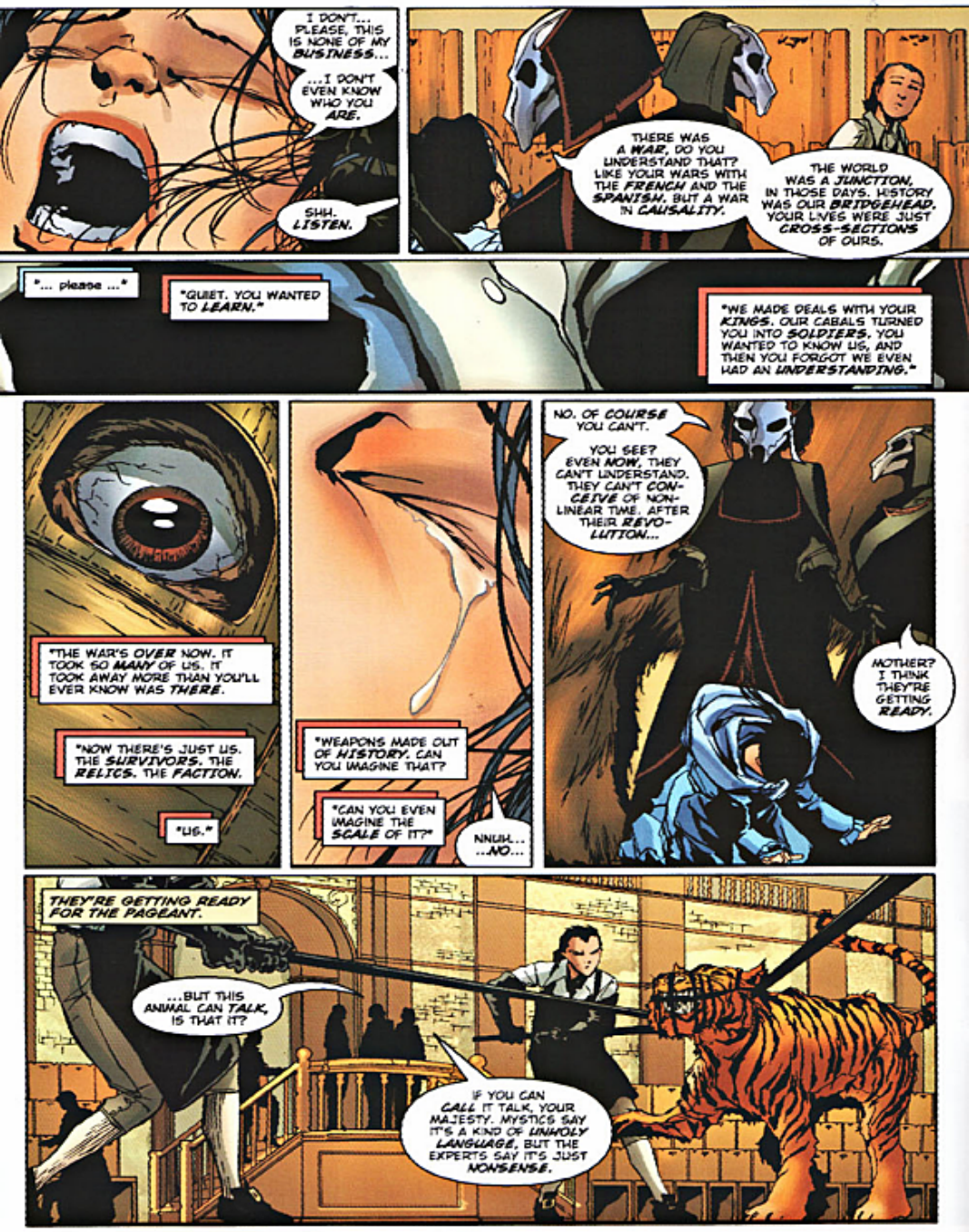
...WE ONLY HOPE TO RE-ESTABLISH LINKS WITH YOUR GREAT NATION, YOUR MAJESTY. OF COURSE, WE HAVEN'T BEEN ACTIVE HERE IN SOME WHILE...
WELL, QUITE, QUITE. CHANGING TIMES, EH, AMBASSADRESS?
NOW, MR. CLEEVE. THIS GIFT YOU MENTIONED...
NOT AS BIG AS CATHERINE'S MAMMOTH, YOUR MAJESTY, ALTHOUGH WE HOPE IT'LL ENTERTAIN YOU.
IT'S SAVAGE, BUT YOU SHOULD SEE HOW IT HUNTS. AND THE LANGUAGE IT USES... SOMETIMES YOU COULD ALMOST SWEAR IT'S CIVILISED.
YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE TO QUESTION THIS. ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE CREATURE'S HUMAN?
PERHAPS THE AMERICANS FIND SLAVERY AMUSING. BUT FOR A ROYAL COURT...
IT MIGHT HAVE A TONGUE, MA'AM, BUT I ASSURE YOU IT'S NO MORE HUMAN THAN A BARBARY APE.
WE HAVE A SAYING WHERE I COME FROM, MOTHER FRANCESCA.
"THEY HAVE NOTHING THAT MAN NEEDS, THAT IN THEIR PAST NEED SHAME."
I...
...EXCUSE ME, YOUR HIGHNESS.
MM? OH, CERTAINLY. CERTAINLY.
YOU WERE SAYING, MISTER CLEEVE. THIS APE ANIMAL...
SAID TO BE SUPERNATURAL, IF YOUR MAJESTY CAN BELIEVE IT.
REVERED BY A CULT ON ONE OF THE POLYNESIAN ISLANDS. THERE'S A SUPERSTITION THEY'VE GOT ABOUT BONES...
SO IT'S TRUE. CLEEVE WAS SENT BY ONE OF THE AMERICAN LODGES.
WHAT HE SAID TO YOU...
...TRIGGERED AN ATAVISTIC RESPONSE. IT'S A SMALL TRICK, BUT THERE ARE ENOUGH CONTRADICTIONS IN THIS ERA ALREADY.
WHERE DO THEY KEEP THE ANIMALS?

HMM.
YOU KNOW, I THINK THE KING'S GOING QUITE MAD.
HE'S ORDERED HALF THE APES TO BE BUTCHERED, DO YOU KNOW THAT? JUST TO MAKE A SPECTACLE.
I HAVEN'T TOLD ISOBEL YET. SHE'S GOT ENOUGH PLAYING ON HER MIND ALREADY.
YOU SEE... I'VE GOT A BETTER MEMORY THAN MOST OF THEM. I WAS HERE THE FIRST TIME THE FACTION SET FOOT IN THE WORLD.
OH, I KNOW THE COURT LIKES TO PRETEND IT'S JUST RECEIVING FOREIGN GUESTS. BUT WE KNOW BETTER, DON'T WE?
YES, OF COURSE WE DO.
YOU KNOW, IT'S A PITY YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND ME. YOU COULD HELP ME WITH MY PROBLEM.
BY RIGHTS I SHOULD KILL YOU. I KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, YOU BEING HERE. YOU. FACTION PARADOX. ALL THE OTHER LEFT -OVERS.
BY RIGHTS I SHOULD KILL ISOBEL TOO. SPARE HER THE INEVITABLE.
HOW WAS YOUR CHICKEN, BY THE WAY? NO BONES, I'M AFRAID. MY LIFE WOULDN'T BE WORTH MUCH, IF YOU GOT HOLD OF THE BONES.
EVEN THE LITTLE ONES.
ISOBEL TALKS TO YOU, DOESN'T SHE?
I WONDER IF YOU UNDERSTAND HER?


HEY!
COME BACK!
SUPPE
SILLY PIG! JUST FOR THAT I SHOULD EAT YOU MYSELF.
I HAD A DREAM ABOUT BEING EATEN UP. BY A BIG FAT BEAST. DID YOU KNOW THAT, SILLY PIG?
IT SMELLED LIKE IT WAS ALL BLOODY. AND...
...AND IT...
OH.
OH, LOOK AT YOU. YOU'RE...
... UM ...
...*USE THIS CREATURE HOW YOU WILL*. EMPRESS CATHERINE'S DIRECTIVE. POLITICALLY ASTUTE. SHE WANTS THE KING TO FEEL THE MAMMOTH'S A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS POWER.
IT'S A CONTRADICTION?
A KEY. A RELIC. HISTORY REVOLVES AROUND IT.
THE KING THINKS THE HUNT IS JUST A PAGEANT. HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE RITUAL OF IT. HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO UNDERSTAND.
HISTORY WILL SHAPE ITSELF AROUND THE BEAST. THE ONE WHO TAKES IT WILL BE AT THE FOCAL-POINT OF THIS ERA'S FUTURE.
THE BET WITH THE AMERICAN WAS JUST A FORMALITY, AND CLEEVE KNOWS IT.
THIS WAS INEVITABLE.

AND NONE OF THEM UNDERSTAND WHO WE ARE?
BARELY ONE SOUL IN A THOUSAND EVEN KNOWS WE EXISTED. BUT THERE ARE GROUPS, SOME OF THE LODGES...
ENGLISH INTELLIGENCE KNOWS US. THEY JUST DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE WAR.
THEY DON'T KNOW WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT.
AS LONG AS THE COURT SEES US AS A SIGNIFICANT POWER, THERE'S THE CHANCE OF AN ALLIANCE IN THIS ERA.
THE AMERICANS MIGHT KNOW. THE WAY CLEEVE TALKS TO YOU...
YES.
IN WHICH CASE WE MAY HAVE TO KILL HIM.
OWW!
THE SERVANT...
I KNOW.
OH...
...I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB YOU. THE PIG...
...IT'S A BABY PIG.
YOU WERE LISTENING, OF COURSE.
THAT'S WHAT SERVANTS DO.
AHH!
PLEASE... I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT...
NO. I KNOW YOU DIDN'T.
SO PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE ME TO EXPLAIN.

...WHAT D'YOU MEAN, "MAD"? YOU CAN'T HAVE A MAD KING. THEY WOULDN'T ALLOW IT.
YOUR FAITH IN THE NATION DOES YOU CREDIT, HOBGATT. BUT THE MODERN AGE MAY BE DISTRESSING HIS MAJESTY SOMEWHAT.
HAVE YOU SEEN ISOBEL?
LAST I SAW, SHE WAS CHASING THE FOREIGNERS. GETTING HER SKIRTS ALL WET AND EXCITED.
AH. IN THAT CASE, I THINK I'D BETTER FIND HER.
AND BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY, MR. HOBGATT. ISOBEL ISN'T AS OLD AS SHE LOOKS.
NNH.
SO... WE GOING TO BE SLAUGHTERING THIS AMERICAN ANIMAL?
doesn't look like much of an animal to me...
IT'S NOT AMERICAN. IT'S FROM THE AMERICANS. AND IN SOME PARTS, KILLING IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED MURDER.
ARE THOSE ROCKS IT'S GOT IN THERE?
"BELIEVE ME, HOBGATT, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
"NOW. DON'T YOU HAVE THE TIGERS TO SEE TO...?"
HUH. POOR BITCH.
HERE. HAVE A MONKEY-LEG.
TIGERS, MR. HOBGATT...
HAH.
RIGHT.
I'M COMING.


I DON'T... PLEASE, THIS IS NONE OF MY BUSINESS...
...I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
SHH. LISTEN.
THERE WAS A WAR, DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? LIKE YOUR WARS WITH THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH. BUT A WAR IN CAUSALITY.
THE WORLD WAS A JUNCTION, IN THOSE DAYS. HISTORY WAS OUR BRIDGEHEAD. YOUR LIVES WERE JUST CROSS-SECTIONS OF OURS.
"... please ..."
"QUIET. YOU WANTED TO LEARN."
"WE MADE DEALS WITH YOUR KINGS. OUR CABALS TURNED YOU INTO SOLDIERS. YOU WANTED TO KNOW US, AND THEN YOU FORGOT WE EVEN HAD AN UNDERSTANDING."
"THE WAR'S OVER NOW. IT TOOK SO MANY OF US. IT TOOK AWAY MORE THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW WAS THERE.
"NOW THERE'S JUST US. THE SURVIVORS. THE RELICS. THE FACTION.
"US."
"WEAPONS MADE OUT OF HISTORY. CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT?
"CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE THE SCALE OF IT?"
NNUH... ...NO...
NO. OF COURSE YOU CAN'T.
YOU SEE? EVEN NOW, THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND. THEY CAN'T CONCEIVE OF NON-LINEAR TIME. AFTER THEIR REVOLUTION...
MOTHER? I THINK THEY'RE GETTING READY.
THEY'RE GETTING READY FOR THE PAGEANT.
...BUT THIS ANIMAL CAN TALK, IS THAT IT?
IF YOU CAN CALL IT TALK, YOUR MAJESTY. MYSTICS SAY IT'S A KIND OF UNHOLY LANGUAGE, BUT THE EXPERTS SAY IT'S JUST NONSENSE.

MUH... MR. HOBGATT?
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
YOU BETTER GET DOWNSTAIRS. SNADDON'S LOOKING FOR YOU.
AND THE KING WANTS TO GET HIS DISPLAY READY. COACH IS GOING TO BE HERE WITH THE REST OF THE FAMILY SOON.
OH... OH, YES. WE HAVE TO PREPARE THE, UM, AMERICAN ANIMAL...
HHUH. NOT AS IF IT DOES MUCH.
I GAVE IT A LEG TO CHEW ON, AND IT DIDN'T EVEN TWITCH.
A LEG ...?
YOU MEAN... A BONE?
...THAT PART OF THE PACIFIC, WELL, PEOPLE JUST DON'T CHART IT. ONE OF OUR NATURALISTS, MR. FISCHER, CAPTURED THE ONLY LIVE SPECIMEN.
THEY'RE CALLED THE MAYAKAI. WE CALL THE ONE IN CAPTIVITY MAYA-KATULA.
FROM THE ISLANDS, YOU SAY?
ALWAYS HAD AN INTEREST IN THE SOUTH SEAS. EVER SINCE COOK BROUGHT THAT WARRIOR CHAP BACK HOME WITH HIM. YEARS AGO NOW.
TALL FELLOW, HE WAS...
MAYAKAI...?
WAIT. PLEASE. THIS... THING. THIS GIFT. IT'S A MAYAKAI?
ARE YOU INSANE, CLEEVE?
MADAM FRANCESCA, SOME DECORUM, I THINK, HM?
YOU KNOW THIS ANIMAL, MA'AM...?
THE MAYAKAI WEREN'T ANIMALS. THEY WERE A PACIFIC WARRIOR-TRIBE. THEY WERE PRIMITIVES, THEY...
...THEY WERE PRIMED FOR THE WAR.
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

"WELL NOW. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH I'M TOO LATE."
ISOBEL SEEMS TO HAVE INVOLVED HERSELF, THE POOR THING.
YOU KNOW, IT'S PECULIAR. I THOUGHT THE WAR WAS OVER FOR ALL THE OLD HALF-BREEDS. I NEVER THOUGHT ANYONE ELSE WOULD EVEN REMEMBER YOU.
NO, DON'T TRY TO GET UP. THAT'S A CIRCLE OF PROOF YOU'RE SITTING IN.
THE TWELVE POINT-STONES OF A MAYAKAI INITIATION. YOU CAN'T CROSS THEM UNLESS YOU CAN SHOW YOUR MOAK HOW MANY ENEMIES YOU'VE BUTCHERED.
RITUAL, YOU SEE? BETTER THAN LEG-IRONS. YOU AND I, WE MUST BE THE ONLY ONES WHO STILL REALLY KNOW...
...WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT?
NYAKH.
OH.
AHH...
...
SE. SE KOPORAYA MAI'KE.
SA SCHAH NA.
TA VOA MAI'KALA.

IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, AMBASSADRESS. I'M SURE THE BEAST'S IN SOME FORM OF CAGE...
YOUR MAJESTY, THE MAYAKA! ARE A LIABILITY. THEY HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED A CLASS OF WEAPON.
THE CREATURE SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
EXCUSE ME...
...OH... EXCUSE ME...
WHAT THE LADY MEANS, YOUR MAJESTY, IS THAT IT'S PART OF A DEAD AGE, PART OF A FIGHT THAT'S OVER NOW, YOU MIGHT SAY.
AND I'D GUESS YOU'D KNOW A LOT ABOUT THAT, WOULDN'T YOU, MOTHER?
IT SHOULD BE EXTINCT...
WHICH MAKES IT IDEAL FOR A ROYAL MENAGERIE. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY?
WELL, QUITE. QUITE. KEEP THEM LOCKED UP BEFORE THEY ALL EAT EACH OTHER, EH?
MR. SNADDON!
MR. -
LIKE YOU SAID, MOTHER. WE'VE GOT THE FUTURE TO THINK ABOUT. AND ALL THE OLD BEASTS, ALL OF NATURE'S MISTAKES...
...WELL, WHERE I COME FROM, WE KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT KEEPING OUR ANIMALS UNDER CONTROL.

SE MAI'SCHAH KOPORAYA, ZO.
SA MUA'SCHAH KA MAI'SE.
SCHAGGA RHO.

THE GAZETTEER

BRITAIN 1744-1752

Really, the British government couldn't have known any better. 1752 was the centre-point of the Age of Reason, the moment—more than any other moment in history—when not even the enlightened gentlemen of Europe knew quite what was rational and quite what was unreasonable, when the great thinkers of the day were happy to write treatises on the science of the Garden of Eden while anatomists dissected the bodies of execution victims with all the pomp and ceremony of a Catholic mass. Groups like Faction Paradox might have *looked* like heathen foreigners, but when they arrived in Europe they must have been welcomed as harbingers of the new philosophy. And it was Britain that Faction Paradox chose as the site of its first embassy to the Western world.

1752 was the year the sky was opened. When the American inventor and ritualist Benjamin Franklin performed his famous experiment to "bring down lightning from Heaven", it wasn't just an investigation into electricity: it was a sign, a ritual act, finally proving that humanity had no qualms about reaching up into the clouds and grabbing hold of forces which had previously been the property of the gods (and *only* the gods). But scientists weren't the only ones trying to drag the power of Heaven down to Earth. In the French Americas, the Negro slaves who'd escaped the plantations had begun building their own religions out of half-remembered myths from Africa and the left-overs of Christianity, creating new and hungry gods in their fight against the European slave-masters. Not the kind of gods who ruled the world from on high (as the slavers did), but sleek, invisible assassins to slit the throats of the French-men and poison the wells. These were *guerrilla* gods. These were the gods of the Revolution.

Great Britain (Lines of Continuity Shown)

Yet in Britain, ritual was still the hobby of high society. In the great estates of England, the members of the "Hellfire Set"—politicians and libertines to a man—were still holding their not-quite-satanic rites in their shrines and cellars, all with the supposed aim of toppling the dull old King George II and putting an altogether more *interesting* monarch on the throne... and if the rituals required large numbers of prostitutes then, well, so much the better. Meanwhile, out in the wider world, Britain and France were already at each others' throats and on the verge of yet another "ungentlemanly dispute". Soon the Seven Years' War would begin: Englishmen and Americans would fight side-by-side against the foreign "menace"; the Duc de Richelieu, the most notorious aristocrat-occultist in Europe, would lead the French attack on Minorca; and a young George Washington would come to learn

a thing or two from the British Freemasons stationed on the American continent.

But that was nothing, not even a shadow, compared to the War about to intersect with the world.

The Signs of the Times

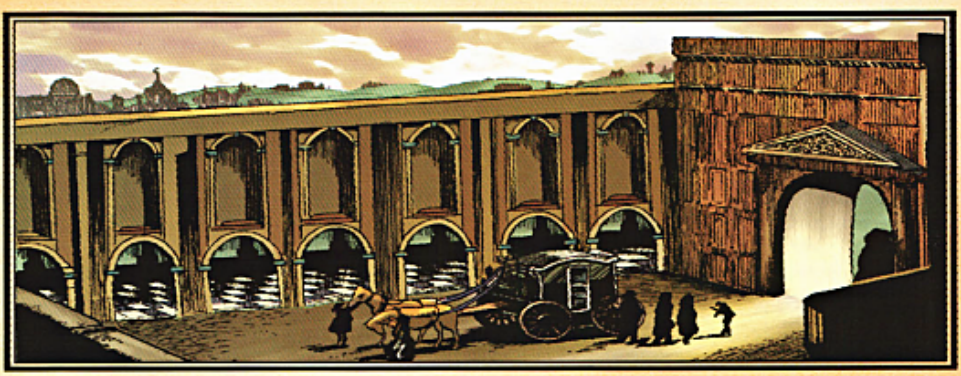
Humanity's involvement with the *War in Heaven* officially began with the 1752 treaty between the British court and Faction Paradox, although it's got to be said that the word *Heaven* was only ever used in European circles: certainly, Faction Paradox itself never claimed that there was anything remotely heavenly about the conflict. In an age when astronomers had only been able to identify six planets and nobody on Earth had any understanding of time as a *dimensional* thing, "Heaven" was the only way the battlefields of the War could even be imagined (although notably, the records of the English intelligence service describe the War as a distinctly *Protestant* struggle while those of the Spanish describe it as a decidedly *Catholic* one). The unseen "higher powers" of the War might not have been the beasts and archangels of the Revelation, but as long as they only sent occasional ambassadors to the world there was no reason for the courts of Europe to ask too many questions. And as for the agents of the Faction... well, disturbing as their masks and manners might have been, they were hardly avenging angels. They could safely be treated like any other exotic foreigners. After all, they were still only human, even if their exact place of origin was a matter of debate.

Is it really surprising that the Europeans, and especially the English, should have been so ready to accept the representatives of the War-time powers? It might be worth noting that in the same period, a new exhibit went on display at the British Museum: a single unburned brick, which experts agreed had come from the foundations of the Tower of Babel after God had struck it down. It was typical of the times. If Biblical relics could be found in the heart of latter-day London, and if even colonials like Mr. Franklin could bring down the fire of Heaven, then surely it was an era of casual miracles?

Typical of *any* great year of change, there was a rash of unexplained birth defects in 1752, almost as if the new gods were trying to come into the world by forcing themselves into the bodies of the freshly-born. But as most of the reports came from rural areas, the defects were regarded as folklore rather than science: the gentlemen of the Enlightenment had little interest in a "*monstrous calf... born in a shape much like that of a ten-year old girl*", when most of the witnesses were just farmers or village midwives. Although a child born with two bodies in Manchester aroused some interest, when she was delivered in January.

Moments of Importance

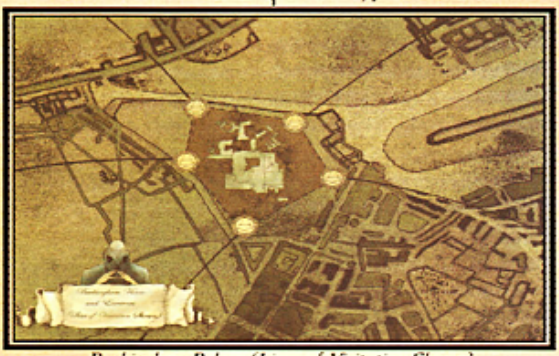
When Faction Paradox made its alliance with the British government, it began the process by which the War would *intersect* with the world, officially making humanity part of a far larger scope of history. The alliance wasn't a military one, of course: even with the advances Britain was making in military technology, there were no weapons anywhere in the era which might have been useful to the Faction. But nonetheless, there were moments in local history which became immediate access-points, convenient shortcuts into War-time. That was, after all, why Faction Paradox had chosen Britain as its target. It was in eigh-



The Queen's House, December 1774.

teenth century Britain that the world's most famous and most accurate timepieces would be made; it was in Britain that time would first be truly *understood*; it was in Britain that the Industrial Revolution would soon begin to stock the world with whole bestiaries full of exotic new machines. It was a crucible of history, and history was the *true* battlefield of the War.

Yet despite maintaining a number of agents in Britain during the 1750s, after 1752 it would be another ten years before Faction Paradox would dispatch another ambassador to London. The Faction was never really one of the major players in the War. It was always a "third party", scavenging from the battlefields while the two *real* sides in the conflict made bigger plans (indeed, neither of the larger powers in the War were known to have forces posted in the 1700s, with the exception of the *Mayakai* bred for warfare on one of the Pacific islands). The Faction had sought allies in Europe, but elsewhere its forces had been decimated by the major powers, or at least killed in the crossfire. When the Faction's representatives returned to Europe in 1762 they seemed desperate for help, probably hoping they could recruit some of the "learned gentlemen" of the era as new agents.



Buckingham Palace (Lines of Visitation Shown)

In fact, the same need for new blood may have fuelled the Faction's third and final mission to London, towards the end of 1774.

The Queen's House

1762 was the year in which the young King George III bought the grand property of Buckingham House, just as Queen Charlotte gave birth to the first of their many, many children: George always considered the production of princes to be a King's main duty in life. The House quickly became known as the Queen's House, and as the War-time powers continued to pass through the world it proved to be a focus for the more *exotic* visitors to the country. When the King radically re-build and expanded "Buck House", the building seemed almost to shape itself around the foreign influences at court, its architects and architecture soon adapting to this new intersection in history. When the House was first built in the early 1700s, its design was straightforward and a matter of record. In modern times its structure is vastly different and surrounded by secrecy. The plans of the House from the late eighteenth century are vague and contradictory, no two sets of blueprints quite agreeing on a single design.

It's a typical feature of sites intersected by the War. It was a War in which the supply-lines were pathways through history, not through territory, and it goes without saying that two-dimensional maps have more than a little difficulty charting causal meta-structures. And in the case of Buckingham House, who can be surprised that the architecture tended to go a little *astray* sometimes? Architecture reflects a nation's history more accurately than anything else in human culture, and if the nation's history had been "compromised" then the brickwork of its most crucial building—a building far closer to the fall-out of the War than even the great Houses of Parliament themselves—was bound to suffer.

George himself, of course, is remembered by history as the King who went mad. Contrary to popular belief, the root of his madness was quite mundane and in no way a result of his exposure to the War-time powers. Although the young King was certainly still sane in the 1760s, he was already beginning to show symptoms of a terrible, inexplicable pain which affected both his body and his mind. Among the servant classes there was talk that this was a form of punishment, after George fathered an illegitimate child on one of the House's serving-girls... but it's never been proved that George, a genuinely *moral* man above all else, ever "bothered" anyone but his wife.

At least not until his lapse into absolute insanity, much later in his life.

The Architecture of the Future

In 1774 much of London was re-modelled by the

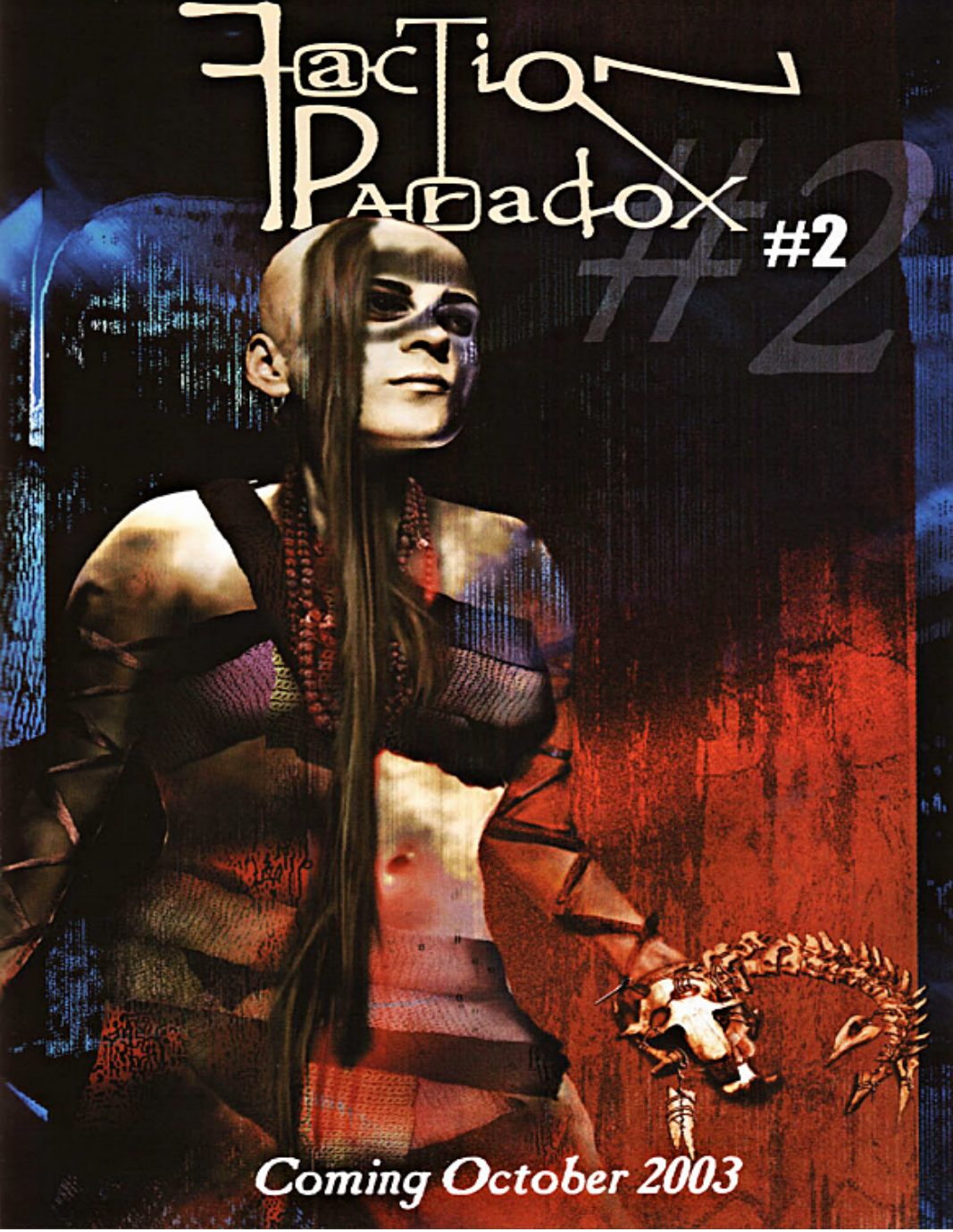
The signing of the treaty. 1752.

King's architect, Robert Adam, the man whose mass-produced monuments helped to usher in Britain's own imperial age. Buckingham House was one of the many sites he helped to develop. It was in 1774 that the great triumphal arches were added, "coincidentally" just in time for the arrival of the King's mammoth from the imperial court of Russia. It was only the latest in a long line of expansions and improvements. There were vast halls beneath the House in those days, enormous chambers which seemed to have rooted themselves in the earth soon after the King obtained the building in 1762. It's been noted that many of the passageways constructed in this period either had no possible use or led to rooms which no longer exist, again suggesting that the building was shaping *itself* around the War. Then there were the huge, tunnel-like spaces which housed the royal menagerie. Originally the menagerie had been quite modest, home to two elephants and a zebra throughout the 1760s, but the new era demanded something larger. Likewise, the two Indian *mahouts* who'd once looked after the collection were soon replaced by a small army of handlers and serving-staff.

The mammoth supplied by Empress Catherine wasn't the only gift to be granted to George III in this era, but it was one of the most striking. Although it's clear that groups like Faction Paradox had access to technological skills far in advance of the age, they seem to have been reluctant to supply the court with their expertise, even though it would surely have gained the King's favour (he was a lifelong tinkerer, who always adored complicated machines and "philosophical devices"). To modern eyes it's obvious that the Faction just didn't want to draw attention to its operations in the eighteenth century. The history books can overlook one-off oddities like, say, a single woolly mammoth at the royal court—in this era the mammoth wasn't believed to be extinct anyway—and so many curious items were being brought back to Europe from the American colonies, from the Pacific islands and from the Australias, that ambassadors like those of Faction Paradox might easily have gone unnoticed by historians... especially as the Faction hardly wanted to make its existence known to the public. But the presence of advanced war-machines in the 1700s would surely have alerted the Faction's enemies to its movements in Britain.

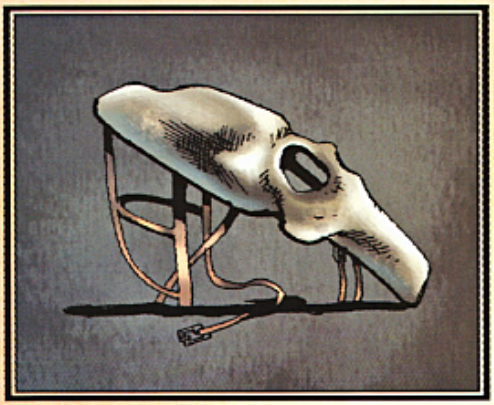
The truth is that by the 1770s, both King and court were happy to accept any token of esteem, mechanical or otherwise. The age was turning out to be a little *too* unpredictable and a little *too* miraculous. It was a time of plagues in Constantinople, of death-cults in Calcutta, of half-crazed visionary artists who claimed to see Britain emerging as the New Jerusalem. In America, the Continental Congress had already been formed, with men like George Washington and Paul Revere demanding a new kind of liberty (or at least, a say in their own taxation). The Americans loathed the British troops who defended the colonies, while panicking troops had already opened fire on the American "rabble-rousers" at least once. Though the King's court might not have realised it, the stately, single-minded gentlemen of the colonies—from the spiritualists of New York to the slave-drivers of Virginia—had *also* glimpsed the War in Heaven, and been inspired by it. The Americans had already seen the "gods" of the new era, and had learned, and studied, and drawn their own conclusions about the future.

The War of the Revolution was still to come. It would be another two years before the world would learn of the secret alliances that men like Thomas Jefferson and Matthew Crane had made, alliances far more alarming than the quiet agreement between Britain and Faction Paradox.


Factio Paradox
#2
Coming October 2003

THE *Reliquary*

THE MASKS OF FACTION PARADOX



Only one of the ceremonial masks worn by the agents of Faction Paradox ever fell into the hands of the European powers: it was kept in the private collection of the Service (i.e. the British intelligence service) during the late 1700s, and was lost along with much of the collection at the turn of the nineteenth century. Despite frequent requests by the Royal Society in London, no scientific examination of the mask was ever carried out, and it remains unclear whether it was genuinely fashioned from the front section of a skull - as most people assumed - or whether its polished surface and lack of teeth marked it out as some form of porcelain replica. It's been suggested that during its "golden age," Faction Paradox's representatives did indeed wear masks of actual bone when they attended court, but that these relics had been lost by the time of the third embassy in 1774, the masks of later ambassadors such as Mother Francesca being simple imitations... reminders, perhaps, of an age when Faction Paradox felt a genuine connection to an older and more visceral power.

If the masks really *were* bone, then it's never been established exactly what creature might have provided the raw material. The (roughly) human outline of the masks led at least one academic of the 1770s to conclude - somewhat shakily - that they were modelled on the skulls of "exotic" human beings, or human beings deliberately deformed by ritual acts of trepanning. Always obsessed with the notion of a War in Heaven, the Service's own inner circle made a tenuous connection between the masks and certain passages in the Bible (including the Book of Genesis and the non-canonical Book of Enoch) which relate to the cross-breeding of humans and "God's children".

Did the Service seriously believe that Faction Paradox had access to relics from the Old Testament era, possibly even relics taken from the bodies of "lost angels"? It seems odd to think that any intelligence service would be *quite* so naïve. But then again, the Service was always known for its superstitious streak. Spies have never been able to resist a touch of the bizarre, British spies especially.

The Five Watchmen of Boston

Bullets have always played an important symbolic role in human culture, and none more so than bullets recovered from the bodies of the great and the good. Even as late as the twentieth century, King Edward VII was said to keep a collection of *death messengers*, the projectiles which had claimed the lives of "noble men and ladies of note" like Madelaine Deerfield and General Wolfe (the hero of the Seven Years' War). In a ritualised society, *any* relic worth its salt will have tasted blood at some point.

The "official" first shots of the American Revolution weren't fired until 1775, but the bloodshed between the British and the colonials was pre-empted at Boston in March 1770, when a group of English sentries found itself surrounded by a hostile mob and responded by firing on the crowd. Though the British acted out of pure panic, in retrospect it almost seems like a moment of ceremony, the precise point at which the Revolution was called into the world through the blood of the five civilians killed by musket-fire. And of course, Boston was no stranger to ritual. Many of those colonials who encouraged the Revolution had been schooled by the secretive Masonic societies, and many, many more had already begun founding their own "traditions" in the New World.

Over the following week the musket-balls were removed from the dead by five of Boston's leading citizens, each man attending one of the bodies as part of a sombre, stately procession. By 1774 the musket-balls - held in the mouths of five carved wax totem-figures, suggesting the Indian "disguises" worn by the colonials who attacked the tea-ships in Boston harbour - were kept as relics in five of the thirteen colony-states: Massachusetts, Virginia, Georgia, Pennsylvania and New Hampshire.

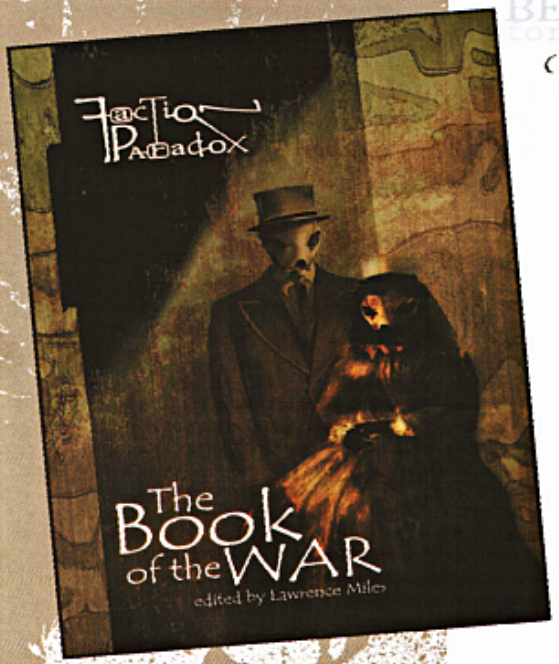
The revolutionary movements of America, including the Continental Congress itself, referred to them as the "five watchmen". America had its first true martyrs, or at least its first true white martyrs, and in theory they guarded the perimeters of the country right up until 1783.

The Bone-Staves of the Mayakai

The concept of the "pointing-bone" is familiar to many pre-industrial cultures. Bone is the last link between the living world and the world of the dead: therefore, if it's pointed at a victim then it can kill, at least if the proper rituals are observed. Anthropologists have traditionally maintained that pointing-bone victims sicken and die for purely psychological reasons, though this doesn't explain the recorded cases of Europeans killed or disabled by the Polynesian *Mayakai*.

The *Mayakai* procedures seem to have been incredibly involved, and as the culture became virtually extinct in 1773 it's doubtful that the details will ever be properly understood. According to the known fragments of *Mayakai* lore, the islanders' obsession with animal biology was a result of their contact with the *Moak*, a word usually translated into English as "gods" but actually more suggestive of "giants". It was supposedly the *Moak* who gave the *Mayakai* the ability to "read" the bone of any animal. Although it's common for tribe-cultures to attach great importance to animal remains, in the minds of the *Mayakai* every beast on Earth was a kind of weapon, *including man*. A thigh-bone from a large mammal could easily kill an enemy (heart attacks are particularly common in the recorded anecdotes), but nervous and muscular reactions could also be triggered, often by bones from animals far too insignificant to have any value in other tribal societies. One of the few Europeans to have encountered a *Mayakai* war-party, in late 1769, was recorded as suffering severe brain damage with no apparent external cause.

In its later years, *Mayakai* society was headed by an all-male council of war, whose six chief members owned - and probably used - strikingly ornate bone-staves. The two surviving "wands", comprised of animal bone from at least eight species, are so intricate that it's often (rather unkindly) been said they must have been inspired by western firearms. Unsurprisingly, popular lore holds that anybody "hit" by one of these staves would suffer a combination of extreme physical symptoms, though obviously the words required to *activate* the weapons have long been forgotten.



before the comic, there was...

The Book of the WAR

Faction Paradox

Before the *Faction Paradox* comic series, there was the War: the terminal face-off between two rival powers and two rival kinds of history, with only the renegades, ritualists and subterfugers of Faction Paradox to stand between them and pick the wreckage clean.

Marking the first five decades of the conflict, *The Book of the War* is an A to Z of a self-contained continuum and a complete guide to the Spiral Politic, from the beginning of recordable time to the fall of humanity. Part story, part history and part puzzle-box, this is a chronicle of protocol and paranoia in a War where the historians win as many battles as the soldiers and the greatest victory of all is to hold on to your own past.

Assembled by Lawrence Miles (*Dead Romance*), with illustrations by Jim Calafiore (*Exiles*, *Aquaman*), *The Book of the War* is a stand-alone work which dissects, defines and pre-wraps the *Faction Paradox* universe, and explains just how things ended up starting this way...

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introducing the all-new novel...

This Town Will Never Let Us Go

Faction Paradox

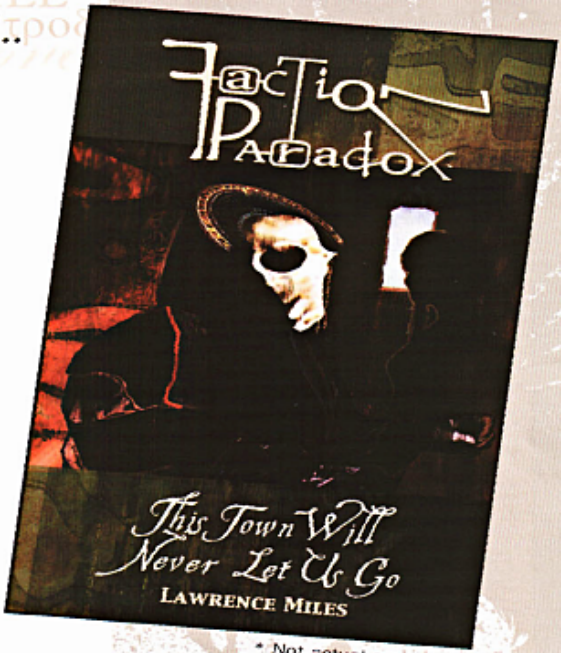
"Why the hell should I listen to the spirits of my ancestors? I never even listened to my parents."

This fall, Mad Norwegian Press debuts the *Faction Paradox* novel line: a series of stand-alone stories covering the past, present and future of the Spiral Politic, from the first chocolate-and-gasoline stopover to the last bolt-hole of the human species.

The series begins in October with *Faction Paradox: This Town Will Never Let Us Go*, by *FP* creator Lawrence Miles. A host of science-fiction novelists are on tap to write future editions, each of them enriching the vast Faction Paradox tapestry.

The Faction Paradox novel range compliments—but is not essential to enjoying—the Image *Faction Paradox* comic series. No pre-knowledge of the universe is required. For more information, check out **www. madnorwegian.com** and **www.faction-paradox.com**.

Format: Trade PB.
MSRP: TBA
Also available as a hardback edition, signed by Lawrence Miles and strictly limited to 300 copies, from the Mad Norwegian website. **MSRP:** TBA



* Not actual cover art.

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Stamp Duty

Vol. 1, Aug. 2003

(i.e. your neighborhood-friendly Letters page)

From Editor Lars Pearson: Welcome to the first-ever *Faction Paradox* letters page, named "Stamp Duty" in keeping with the War of Independence. (We considered calling it "Faction Postbox"—for two seconds.)

For anyone who's a newcomer, I'm in the paradoxical (no pun intended) situation of briefly outlining the 5-year history of "Faction Paradox"... *without* freaking anyone out at the thought of buying loads of back-stock.

No, no. Don't panic. We've tailored the image *Faction Paradox* series as a stand-alone work. Not a lick of foreknowledge is required. Even so, it falls to me, as the hapless, overworked and most certainly underpaid editor, to set the stage for our players.

Writer Lawrence Miles initially launched the Faction five years ago in some BBC sci-fi novels, beginning with *Alien Bodies* (BBC Books, Nov. 1997). A smattering of other non-Miles BBC books featured the Faction in a very loose sense, although explaining it here would be far, far too confusing.

Not that you need to read *any* of this to enjoy this comic series. Really.

In 2001, UK-based audio producer BBV started releasing full-cast *Faction Paradox* dramas on CD. Four volumes *are* out, and they're quite lovely, featuring jacket art by Steve Johnson, who does our comic covers.

Again, you really don't need to listen to the CDs to make sense of the comic. But we know some of you are rabid enough to try.

So now we're getting to the good stuff. In September, 2002, Mad Norwegian Press published *Faction Paradox: The Book of the War*, a 170,000-word guide to the first 50 years of the "War" that Mother Francesca mentions inside these pages (the image series opens up *after* the War and deals with its survivors, if you're keeping track). Miles wrote/edited most of *The Book of the War*, with contributions from nine suitably loopy sci-fi writers.

Needless to say, reading *The Book of the War* is superfluous to basking in the glory that is the comic. That said, since *The Book of the War* is a solid entry point into the Faction Paradox universe (and Lawrence's labyrinthine mind) we obviously hope you'll give it a look—mostly because we're paupers and desperately need the cash.

Finally, in October 2003, Mad Norwegian Press will kick off the *Faction Paradox* novel line. As you might have guessed, you don't need to read the novels to enjoy the comic series, but we're proud of them anyway.

And now, as we obviously don't have any readers' letters from *last* issue, Lawrence Miles has written one to himself...

Dear You.

This is going to be the first letter published in this letter column. It's also going to be the last, which sounds a lot more ominous than it really is, but we'll come to that. From me, the writer, Lawrence Miles: to you, the writer, Lawrence Miles, some years down the line once all of this is over.

It's in keeping with the rest of the comic, anyway. Or at least that's the excuse I'm using. Faction Paradox... intersections in history... getting involved in your own past and future (q.v. issue #21)... possibly you'll want to think of it as something that seemed like a good idea at the time.

As you write this, it's late January 2003, and you're getting ready for the launch of *Faction Paradox* sometime around August. Obviously this letter's going to be printed in the first issue, but as of today you've decided that it's also going to be printed in the very *last* issue, which - assuming that everything doesn't go horribly, tragically wrong - should be some distance in the future. This means that as long as you remember to re-print this message (and I think it's fair to say that nobody's going to let you forget), I've got the chance to remind you what you were thinking about when you started. Of course, if you've reached the end of the series then technically it's too late for me to make a difference, since the story ended two pages ago. But there *are* certain things I hope you've done by now, plus certain things I hope you've managed *not* to do, and at the very least I can still make you feel guilty about your mistakes. And let's face it, it's not often that a younger man gets to do that to an older one. So hi.

Firstly. Over the past few years of writing the scripts, I hope you've managed to side

step the whole problem about *Faction Paradox* not being "cool" enough for some tastes. You were very insistent about that, right at the start, and I'd hate to think that you forgot about it at any stage. Frankly, *Faction Paradox* was always going to look a bit... well... awkward, in that respect. Here in the early 2000s, "cool" properties are the order of the day, and any comic-book worth its reputation is guaranteed to feature at least one slinky female assassin with infra-red targeting systems wired into her contact lenses, or a character carrying the T-gene (this being the DNA sequence unique to comic-book people which makes them look so much better in leather trenchcoats than we do).

How about you, though? You've been writing a slightly peculiar, almost *quaint* story about human ritual during the American War of Independence. I'm sure it won't have escaped anyone's attention that this hasn't given you much scope to give any of the characters bio-cybernetic implants, or indeed, even to make them wear sunglasses. No, it's something you resigned yourself to some time ago: *Faction Paradox* isn't a cool comic, and it was never really going to be. But - at least as I see it now, and if you don't still see it the same way then there'll be trouble - it is quite a *good* one. A very good one, potentially, although by my reckoning we'll be up to #6 by the time we all figure that out.

But that's just it. I know what you're like. It can't have been easy for you, in the first year or so of the run, writing this obscure little pseudo-historical piece while big grown-up comics got all the kicks and the big guns. At some point you'll have been tempted to try to cool things up a bit, maybe to squeeze Mayakatula into something latex or to unexpectedly reveal that Faction Paradox has a big shiny silver robot hidden under Buckingham Palace. (You see, I'm tempted already. That actually sounds interesting.) Because, basically, you secretly just want the attention. So I'm hoping... trusting, even... that you won't have done anything stupid. You know what you meant to do with this story, when you started out. You had points to make, worlds to build, visions to envision and all the other things you usually go on about. If by now you haven't done that "thing" about North American cannibalism, or that other "thing" you thought would probably fit nicely into the plot somewhere around issue #19, then I'll be very, very cross. Don't get lazy or I'll make you feel guilty for years. And don't argue with me, either, because you know you've always wanted to sound like Hari Seldon.

I'm 30 years old now, and that's a problem in itself. This is the time of life when you get the nasty feeling that you used to be slightly less tired, and already I have less of an urge to (say) blow up the Houses of Parliament than I did a few months ago. By the time this is re-printed you'll be pushing 40, and I know for a fact - for a *fact* - that you'll be flirting with women half your age in a really, really embarrassing way (you've got the advantage there, I *could* try to do the same thing but it'd be disturbing). And what I'm saying, at the end of the day, is this: if you haven't drunk yourself into an early grave by now, then I'm hoping you won't have slowed down much, either. Since your final 12 issues will already have demonstrated whether or not we succeeded in what we set out to do.

Somebody once told me that it takes seven years for every cell in your body to die and be replaced, so after seven years there isn't a single piece of the "old" you left. This means, and I can't resist saying it, that by the time you read this I'll be dead. Of course, by now you'll probably have been told that this "scientific" fact isn't really true, but it's a nice thought anyway.

Yours and mine,
Lawrence Miles.

P.S. So, was *Star Wars Episode III* any good?

FINAL BITS OF BUSINESS: *Faction Paradox* writer Lawrence Miles and cover artist Steve Johnson will be doing an October signing at *Tenth Planet, 36 Vicarage Field Shopping Centre, Barking, Essex, IG11 8DQ, England.* The exact date is still unconfirmed, but check out the Mad Norwegian website (**www.mad-norweglan.com**) for details.

Also, join your fellow *Faction Paradox* readers at the Unofficial Faction Paradox forum at: **http://pub8.ezboard.com/bfactionparadox.**

NEXT ISSUE: *Mother Francesca deals with the colonials' loss of their pet, the bone-wielding Mayakatula. All this, plus the introduction of Sabbath, a British Secret Service agent important to Faction lore, in Faction Paradox #2: "Bêtes Noires and Dark Horses," on sale in October.*